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ABSTRACT

THIS ARTICLE DEALS WITH THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE MOVEMENT AND THE WORK OF THE CENTER RELATING TO JUNIOR COLLEGES. COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE PRACTICING WHAT STUDENTS IN THE PRESTIGE UNIVERSITIES ARE DEMANDING: THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION WHICH INCLUDES RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY NEEDS, AN OPEN ENTRANCE POLICY, THE ABOLITION OF THE CONCEPT OF "FAILURE," AND EMPHASIS ON THE QUALITY OF TEACHING RATHER THAN RESEARCH. CENTER RESEARCH ON COMMUNITY COLLEGES HAS INCLUDED STUDIES OF THE QUALITY AND BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS, FACULTY ATTITUDES, GOVERNANCE, AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT. A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CENTER PUBLICATIONS ON THE 2-YEAR COLLEGE IS INCLUDED. (AF)

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THE QUIET REVOLUTION

WHILE EVOLUTIONISTS and revolutionists on traditional college campuses continue their headline-grabbing demands for education that is "relevant to our times," one of the greatest transitions in American higher education is quietly taking place in America's newest colleges.

At Berkeley and Columbia, students demanded more university attention to the needs of the community; in the shadow of these great universities, community colleges were locating themselves in the heart of the urban ghettos with the commitment to serve the community first. As students on prestigious campuses throughout the nation protested against the admissions barriers that made them elite, community colleges pledged that their doors were open to all who wished to study. While university professors are rewarded for research and publications, community college faculty are rewarded for classroom teaching. While tradition-bound colleges timidly venture the removal of grades from a few elective courses, community colleges experiment with the abolition of the concept of "failure" in the learning process.

It is not altogether surprising that the *cause celèbres* of the nation's oldest institutions should be daily fare for our youngest colleges. Many community colleges were born in the midst of social turmoil, and in a sense, the vitality of the community college movement itself may be said to be a response to the changing society. Two social forces stand out above all others in creating the distinctive identity of the community colleges; 1) the demand of an increasingly egalitarian society for the democratization of higher education and 2) the need of a technological society for a better educated citizenry. In combination, these pressures have culminated in a national commitment to universal postsecondary education. To accept this goal, however, is to accept the responsibility to provide meaning ful education for *all* who wish to continue their education. The community colleges are finding out just how difficult that really is; for it involves the revolutionary concept that the college must be made to "fit" the students — as contrasted with the traditional notion that sudents should be selected to "fit" the college. It means shifting the burden of proof from the student to the college, and it is an idea that is at the heart of both the noisy revolution and the quiet one.

To develop a college for the diversified student body that presents itself at the open door of the community college is a formidable task. The array of talents and goals is great. There is the average student who is not quite sure he can make it at the university; there is the bright one who can't afford to leave home and a job to go away to college; there is the poor student who lacks even the basic learning skills but who recognizes the importance of preparing for a career; and there is the student from a minority group who sees the community college as a bridge to equal opportunities. There is the housewife who seeks cultural enrichment and the technologically obsolete family man who wants job retraining. It is no wonder that community colleges have added the word "comprehensive" to their titles.

For more than a decade the Center and its closely allied university community college programs have studied and participated in the development of community colleges. In addition to research on students, faculty, programs, services, structures, accreditation, articulation, and administration, there have been innovative programs to train a new group of teachers and administrators for participation in the quiet revolution.* Looking to the future, the staff has recently formulated guidelines that will take the research and development programs of the Center still further into the systematic study of this important educational institution. While the work of Center researchers pertaining to two-year colleges cannot be condensed into these few pages, this article will attempt to capture some

*See back page for an annotated bibliography of books and monographs related to community colleges by Center staff members.

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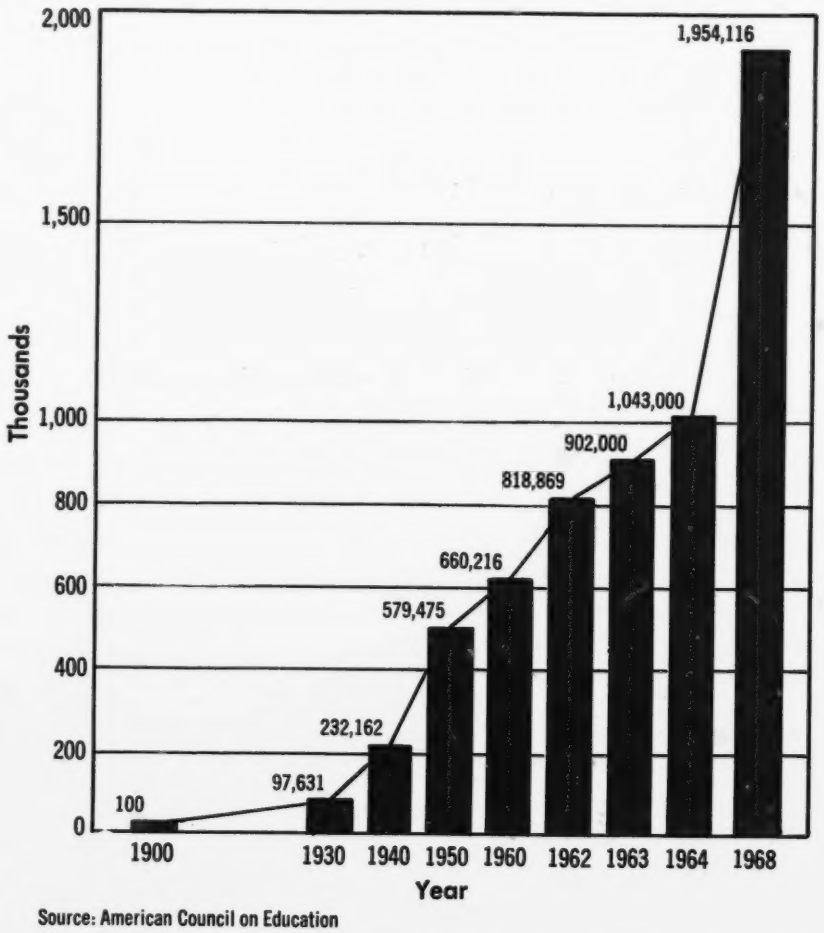
GROWTH IN ENROLLMENTS IN JUNIOR COLLEGES



Source: American Council on Education

of the action associated with the goal of universal post-secondary education and its impact upon the two-year colleges.

THE STUDENTS

It is apparent from the research data that the democratization of higher education has begun. The students attending community colleges are much more representative of the population at large than are students in four-year colleges and universities. By and large, the four-year colleges were developed for an elite segment of the total population, and when large, nationally diverse samples are considered, the four-year colleges still serve a highly selective group. Of the 33,000 students in the SCOPE study (Tillery, 1969) who graduated from high school in 1966, sixty-eight percent of those in the top quartile in ability and 51 percent of those from the top group in family occupational level entered a four-year college or university. Junior colleges attracted 15 percent of the top ability quartile students, and 21 percent for the upper group in socioeconomic level. When the figures are viewed from the perspective of the mix present in the entering classes, the two-year colleges look quite similar to the high school population on these two highly relevant educational variables. In tested academic ability, junior college classes had 20 percent from the top quartile, 31 percent from the second, 32 percent from the third, and 17 percent from the fourth quartile. Since by definition a representative sample of the SCOPE high school classes would have 25 percent in each category, the two-year colleges have a majority of students in the second and third quartiles with somewhat fewer very good and very weak students than would be expected for a representative group of high school seniors.

Indicators of socioeconomic levels follow much the same pattern. The proportions of students in junior colleges from the four groups of family occupational level are as follows: very high 21 percent, high 27 percent, moderate 33 percent, and low 19 percent. The fact that over half of the junior college students are coming from the moderate and low income groups is heartening evidence that the community colleges are contributing a great deal to the equalization of educational opportunity.

Past studies at the Center (Medsker & Trent, 1965; Trent & Medsker, 1967; see also Cross, 1968) have demonstrated the considerable importance of socioeconomic factors on the educational interests, motivations, aspirations and achievements of students. The occupational level of the family has been found a good index to family encouragement for educational endeavors, and it is also related to the student's past exposure to intellectual ideas and interests. Eighty-two percent of the children of professional fathers are now attending college, and 52 percent of these are enrolled in private colleges and universities (Tillery, 1969). For the past decade the great increases in college entrants have been from the high socioeconomic and ability levels. Higher education has just about reached the saturation point for this segment of society, and the student of the future is necessarily going to come from the second and third quartiles on measures of ability and socioeconomic status. Many of these students, the first in their families ever to go to college, are already in the community colleges.

Perhaps because they hope to leave the alternatives open as long as possible or perhaps because our society has over-valued academic ability at the expense of other skills and interests, about half of the students entering community colleges enroll in college parallel curricula. The next largest enrollments – about one-fourth of the students – are in the two-year technical programs. To community college students, "college parallel" is not necessarily synonymous with "transfer," and increasingly there is agreement that opportunities for transfer to a senior institution should not be closed for any student. Eighty-five percent of the college parallel group, but 43 percent of those in technical programs, and 21 percent of those in the occupational courses say, in their first semester of college, that they plan to transfer to a four-year college. The aspirations of students generally exceed their accomplishments, however, and in the past only about a third of the students beginning their work in community colleges have transferred. For those who have taken the transfer route, the obstacles to admission to the four-year institutions have been few (Willingham & Findikyan, 1969) and student academic progress after transfer has been generally good (Knoell & Medsker, 1965).

But the college parallel courses are not really part of the quiet revolution nor, for the most part, are the students in them. These students are the most traditional of the community college population. Data from the College Board's new Comparative Guidance and Placement Program (1969) showed 46 percent of the college parallel students from white collar families, compared with only

25 percent of the students taking vocational programs of less than two years' duration. Large numbers of vocational students, 35 percent, are from the homes of unskilled or semi-skilled laborers, and 50 percent have fathers who did not complete high school. While 91 percent of the college parallel group are Caucasian with only 5 percent Negro, 70 percent of the vocational students are Caucasian and 14 percent are Negro. Students in the two-year technical programs fall in between on these socioeconomic indicators (Cross, 1969). It should be remembered, of course, that the college parallel students only look affluent in comparison with their fellow students in community colleges. When compared as a group with typical four-year college students, they rank considerably lower on the socioeconomic scale.

Despite the fact that the community colleges are developing some new programs and have ventured forth with considerable courage to experiment with some new forms of education, the heavy emphasis on traditional academic courses gives pause for thought. The community colleges are embedded in a society in which there is a risk in departing from established reward systems. Students reflect these insecurities. Left to their own devices students seem to register for academic courses – whether or not they find them interesting, relevant, or useful—because society confers prestige on courses that fit the picture of "college" courses. To their credit, community colleges have worked especially hard at attempting to provide counseling and guidance services that will help students to appraise and develop their strengths.

FACULTY

The mission and ideals of the community college movement are largely articulated by leaders and authors; the realities are accomplished by the faculty. Statewide master plans may define, junior college leadership programs may educate future administrators, national organizations may give common direction and visibility, but it is hard to overestimate the influence of the faculty on the actual accomplishments of the community colleges. A study of nearly 4000 full-time faculty members in 57 community colleges will be included in research soon to be reported by Medsker (1970), but a preliminary glimpse of some of his findings will provide some important insights into faculty attitudes.

In the answers of faculty, it is immediately apparent that the community colleges have made progress in establishing an identity for themselves. It is equally apparent that much of the traditional thinking about higher education lingers in faculty attitudes. While 90 percent of the faculty endorse the transfer program and 85 percent agree that the two-year technical curricula are essential, the farther the suggestions stray from the degree programs, the more dubious the faculty become. Only 50 percent feel that the occupational curricula for skilled and semi-skilled trades are essential, and only 21 percent are wholehearted in their support for the occupational programs that are less than two years' duration. Actually, 26 percent of the faculty think that the latter programs are inappropriate for the community colleges.

Faculty seem unable to get away from their concern with "standards" and "quality." Almost half (49 percent) think there is too much stress on the quantity of students and not enough on the quality. Despite the unanimous agreement in state master plans that junior colleges should admit any high school graduate, 45 percent of the faculty disagree. Yet, when the traditional criteria of tests and past performance are introduced, 88 percent agree that those who may reasonably be expected to succeed on the basis of these predictors should be admitted to the junior college. Evidently the question of what it means to "succeed" continues to be interpreted in traditional terms of grades and credit hours.

In an earlier book, Medsker (1960) drew upon the theory of reference groups to posit that the attitudes of junior college faculty may be closely aligned to those of senior college faculty since the latter represent the prestigious academy to which many junior college teachers aspire. His findings support the theory. Junior college faculty do reflect the hierarchical values associated with traditional "academic respectability," and 44 percent admit they would really rather teach in a four-year college or university. Those who expressed a preference for a senior institution were also those most likely to be opposed to occupational and remedial programs in the community colleges (Medsker & Tillery, 1970).

Although faculty may have some reservations about the means, they are hearty in their endorsement of the philosophy of the junior college as a flexible institution that should be unhampered by conventional notions of what constitutes higher education, and 84 percent agree that one of the big advantages of the junior college is that the student can explore college without large losses of time and money, or fear of failure.

GOVERNANCE

The question of how community colleges should be controlled and supported is a critical one that is receiving increasing attention. Consistent with their community orientation, many community colleges have been heavily dependent upon local taxing bodies. But the costs of education continue to mount, and resistance to additional taxes on real property becomes increasingly severe. The alternative of raising student fees or charging tuition defeats one of the major purposes of the community colleges – that of making education possible for students of low income. One solution to the dilema seems to be to pass more of the responsibility for financial support to the state. In approximately 25 states, governance and financial support are shared by state and local governments, and there are signs of increasing centralization of responsibility at the state level. In recent years the federal government, too, has shown considerable interest in the community colleges, and there are new questions about its role in supporting community college development.

While some of the immediate problems of the community colleges are financial, the questions surrounding control are also of increasing interest and concern to Center staff members. What is the optimum balance between local autonomy and statewide coordination of post-

secondary education? What should be the relationship between the two-year colleges and other schools and colleges in the state? What are the considerations that should lead to variations in the models for different states? What are the problems arising in the new multi-campus districts?

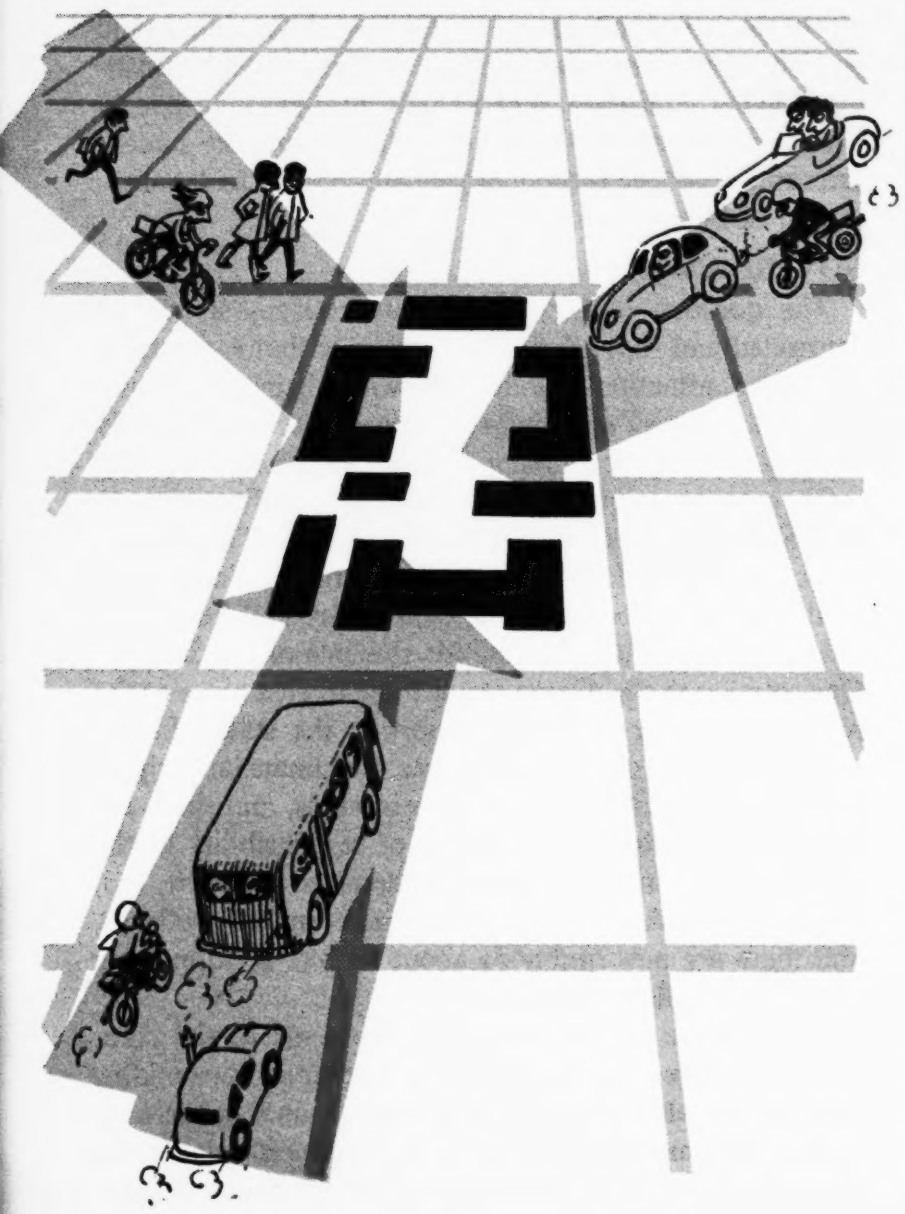
There are no simple solutions. The Center will be giving increasing attention in future years to the complexities of governance in the total spectrum of higher education, and the issues highlighted by the community college will receive major attention. Some of these considerations are discussed in forthcoming publications. One of these is a profile of the American junior college prepared for the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Higher Education; the other is a comprehensive treatment of the public two-year college by Medsker. Both will be published in 1970.

NEW DIRECTIONS

The roots of the two-year college concept extend back to post-Civil War days, but the phenomenal growth and vitality of the movement is of relatively recent origin. It has been contended in this article that much of the new spirit has come about as a response to the new needs of society and the community colleges' unique response to them. In a sense, their explosive growth indicates that they are fulfilling some needs not previously provided for. There are now almost 1000 two-year colleges serving close to two million students. The community colleges have borne the major brunt of expansion in enrollments which have doubled over the past decade. The four-year institutions have increased their entering student enrollment by 80 percent, but for the two-year colleges there has been a 200 percent increase in the number of students enrolling for the first time. It is a demonstrable fact that the community colleges have opened new opportunities for many thousands of students. And it is also evident that the students who are coming to the community colleges differ in important ways from the traditional college student. What is not at all clear is how well the community colleges are doing in breaking out of the old molds to provide meaningful education for these new students. It must be admitted that some community colleges are simply weak copies of traditional higher education. They would really like to be more selective in admissions, to recruit more PhDs to the faculty, to attract research grants and in general to "raise standards." Ultimately, of course, they would like to offer four years of academic, discipline-oriented study.

This is certainly not the picture of some of the leading community colleges, where the atmosphere is pervaded with a sense of excitement and discovery in approaching a new task. Some are experimenting with "outreach" programs that reach directly into the urban ghettos; some are trying new methods of teaching and learning in rather dramatic departures from the classroom lecture; some are deeply concerned with the correction of educational deficiencies, poor learning habits, and lack of motivation. Developing the concept of "distributing" young people and adults to a great variety of jobs and further education has directed the attention of many to new patterns of counseling and guidance. New functions create new structures, and innovations in governance and student participation in decision-making are absorbing the interests of still others. The challenges are many for the community college seeking to develop an institution which is responsive to the needs of students and society.

K. Patricia Cross



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Tillery, Dale. *School to college: Distribution and differentiation of youth.* New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1969, in press.

Willingham, Warren and Findikyan, Nurhan. *Patterns of admission for transfer students.* New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1969.

BOOKS AND MONOGRAPHS RELATED TO TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

Following are recent books and monographs by Center authors. Titles not published by the Center are obtainable through the publishers. ERIC Document numbers (ED) indicates reproductions of a publication may also be obtained by writing to: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, National Cash Register Company, 4936 Fairmont Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20014.

Clark, Burton R. *The open door college: A case study*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960.

An institutional analysis of a junior college, concerned with: characteristics of the student body; the role of the college as preceived by students, faculty, and the community; and the administrative organization of the institution.

Cross, K. Patricia. *The junior college student: A research description*. Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1968. (ED 024 354)

A synthesis of recent research on characteristics of junior college students, discussed under the following headings: academic characteristics, socioeconomic background, finances, self-concepts, interests and personality, reasons for attending college, choice of vocation and major field of study, and educational and occupational aspirations.

Gott, Richard. *Junior college into four-year college: Rationale and result in two institutions*. Berkeley, California: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 1968. ($2.00) (ED 025 236)

A study of two junior colleges which extended into four-year colleges. Seeks to determine to what extent the two-year function continues to be performed within the four-year college setting. Identifies factors that seem to militate for and against continuation of these functions.

Knoell, Dorothy M. and Medsker, Leland L. *From junior to senior college: A national study of the transfer student*. (Available for purchase through the American Council on Education, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.) ($2.50)

A summary of a nationwide study of the performance of the transfer student and the articulation and coordination between two- and four-year colleges and universities. The study involved some 10,000 students, 345 two-year institutions which they entered as freshmen, and 43 senior colleges and universities to which they transferred.

Medsker, Leland L. *The junior college: Progress and prospect*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960.

The study includes: 1) an overview and evaluation of the two-year college movement; 2) an analysis of its students, faculty, educational programs, transfer and terminal functions, and personnel services; 3) organization and development in various states; and 4) problems and expectations for the immediate future.

Medsker, Leland L. and Clark, George W. *State level governance of California junior colleges*. Berkeley, California: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 1966. ($2.00) (ED 011 347)

A study of state-level governance of California junior colleges — the composition, duties, powers, and responsobilities of a central coordinating agency, the statutory and fiscal implications of such an agency, and the problems of local-state relationship.

Medsker, Leland L. and Messersmith, L. *Accreditation of vocational-technical curricula in postsecondary institutions*. Berkeley, California: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 1969. ($2.00)

A study of certain critical aspects of accreditation in vocational-technical education in the United States; an assessment of the current issues as well as implications for the future.

Trent, James W. and Medsker, Leland L. *Beyond high school: A psychosociological study of 10,000 high school graduates*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1968. (ED 016 248)

A study following 10,000 high school graduates for four years through patterns of work, college, and marriage. It investigates the high school graduates' progress in work and college, their evaluation of this progress, and factors related to withdrawal from college. The primary focus is on the impact of college versus employment on change of values and attitudes.

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